space research programme were found to contain bricks meant for construction of buildings, etc; and

(b) whether any enquiry has been made in the matter, if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir. A consignment of Aluminium Vanadium, required for producing Titanium alloy for supply to ISRO and others, was imported by Mishra Dhatu Nigam Ltd from Germany. Upon taking delivery in March, 1997, it was found that the packs contained mostly masonry bricks.

(b) An FIR has been lodged with the Bombay Police and the matter is under investigation.

IAF Trainee Pilots died in Air crash

1599. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Pilots trainees of Indian Air Force, who died in air crash during the preceding five years;

(b) whether their lives were insured for the training period; and

(c) if not, the reasons and justification therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Five Trainee pilots of the IAF were killed in aircrashes in the preceding five year.

(b) and (c) Trainee pilots of the IAF are made members of the Air Force Group Insurance Scheme (AFGIS) from the date of joining the Training Institute and effective from 1.5.1997 are provided with life insurance cover of Rs. 10 lakhs with monthly contribution of Rs. 800/- and Rs. 560/- for aircrew and ground duty branches, respectively.

Improving the fighting capability of Indian Nevy

1600. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the latest 1997-98 edition of Jane's 'Fighting Ship' wherein it has been stated about Indian Navy that its fighting capability is at all time low; and

(b) if so, the measures Government propose to take to improve the fighting capability of Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A number of steps have been taken as countermeasures to the emerging threat scenario as also to catch up with the force levels. Infact, a two pronged approach has been adopted-first to import ships and submarines to meet the immediate requirements, and second to take recourse to indigenous construction for meeting the long term requirements.

All developments having a bearing on the security of the country and its assets are kept under constant observation by Government and appropriate countermeasures are initiated from time to time, to maintain defence preparedness.

Visits by Defence Minister to U.P.

1601. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA':
SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) how many times the Union Defence Minister has used Army planes or helicopters for visiting various places in U.P., the dates and places of such visits;

(b) how many of such visits were officials and non-officials;

(c) whether any persons other than officers of Defence Ministry/forces also